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THE NEW EXAMINATIONS

NON-LITERARY TOPICS — QUESTIONS ON THE OPEN LIST.

I. Specimen Compositions from the Harvard 1908 Examinations.¹

Five out of eight topics for the one-hour composition in June were not taken from prescribed books, but they were all expository; thus,

4. The effect of the game of foot-ball on the school of which you have been a member during the past year. 5. What subjects you plan to study in college, and your reasons for choosing them. 6. An exposition of some principle in physics, with description of an experiment which illustrates it. Use drawings or diagrams, if necessary. 7. The powers and duties of the President under the Constitution. 8. The life of Themistocles.

Four out of nine topics, in September, were taken from the candidate's general knowledge and other studies (and one other, in part), but all again were mainly expository; thus,

5. Your reasons for your choice of a college. 6. Your training in English literature and composition. 7. Describe clearly some piece of apparatus you have used in your study of physics, explaining its purpose; use drawings or diagrams, if necessary. 8. Julius Caesar as he is portrayed by Shakespeare, and as he appeared in history. 9. The Armada, the causes which led to it, and its defeat.

Narrative topics of personal experience, such as are prescribed by the new requirements (and may appear on papers *before* 1913) were not drawn upon for variety. Such a topic as "7. Some aspect of your school life during the past year" (Harvard Adv. Eng. A, June), or "6. Winter amusements in your native town" (September), makes a little more direct appeal to personal experience; but still the departure from the old-time book-topic in a majority of options last year was attended with some encouraging results. To be sure, three-quarters of the June candidates wrote on "The Appearance and Character of Dr. Johnson," and three-quarters of the September candidates on the character of Shylock or the early life of Silas Marner. Few risked the non-literary topics, for which they were not prepared, and which hardly gave the non-literary candidate much variety of choice. Of course, any literary topic, skilfully formulated, is capable of live treatment by a writer who is not afraid of recording his own natural impressions and recollections in a simple, straightforward way (like number 5, page 6). The following compositions, however, which, under the circumstances, could not have been prepared for, are suggestive of the greater possibilities of the non-literary topics of wider range that may be expected in the new examinations:

¹ Grateful acknowledgments are hereby tendered to the Committee on Admission for permission to lay these compositions before the Association. Each is printed exactly as written, with all its imperfections on its head. Marginal criticisms by the examiners are indicated by †'s. The grade is that given to the whole book, not the composition alone.

1. THE FOOT-BALL SEASON OF 1907.

(Topic No. 4, above.) From a *B* book, raised on second reading to *A* — June Final.

The game of foot-ball had a decidedly bad effect on the ——— School last year. From the opening of school until the middle of December the hierarchy of this particular branch of the cultus of Athleticism were nearly in control of the school. They were constantly being excused for practice, they very frequently brought notes from their foolish parents explaining lack of preparation of home-lessons, and they upset the school beyond measure with their ceaseless semi-professional management, disposition of tickets, and other such annoyances. But by far the greatest damage was done to the rest of us through the delay, reviewing and “beginning all over again,” that they might catch up.

† It is not alone the influence on their own characters, — the feeling that this was the first business of the school, that they were born leaders of men and had no use for books, that colleges want good athletes now, and not scholars, that they have support, admiration, almost adoration — it is not alone the evil subtly worked into the characters of the athletic leaders themselves which is deplorable. That is their affair and concerns the world but little. It is rather the irreparable demoralization of the school. Through the strenuous efforts of the newspapers, — which bolster up athletics for the sake of the circulation, — through the peculiarly shortsighted toleration of Authority, the admirers of the athletes have taken an attitude towards the school and the school’s avowed purpose which will inevitably bring about the utter decline of classical scholarship in the very near future. A classical school, of all others, cannot live down neglect, cynical disobedience, passive defiance, — the breaking away from the ideals and aspirations of this noblest of fields of study. Let the High priest of foot-ball neglect his school work, — let him become the general of the Opposition, and his *coterie* of worshippers will uphold him to any extent. For — and I cannot emphasize it too strongly — the attitude of the school and of the public towards him does not rest on his school work.

Thus the foot-ball season of 1907 was endured, and thus it always has been endured since Athletics became the great attraction of secondary schools. Whether the season is successful or otherwise, the same insatiate interest is taken in foot-ball. The study of the game, and the career and characteristics of its “stars” were so elaborated, so painfully followed through, and so wistfully abandoned — when the season ended — in the ——— School last year, that one wonders what enjoyment is to be extracted from such exhaustively thorough interest.

What is the remedy? Is the same thing to be gone through this fall, and indefinitely afterwards, until the *tone* of the school is destroyed? The problem has grown to such vast proportions in the last twenty years that now it seems hopeless. The most heroic measures are all that will preserve the American school system from demoralization; if the stern and repressive methods of Germany must be brought in,

let it be so. A few years more of carelessness, and the bad effect of foot-ball over-importance will be beyond repair. †

2. THE EFFECT OF THE GAME OF FOOT-BALL ON ———

(*Topic No. 4.*) From a *C* book (the best composition that could be found in favor of foot-ball, but commendable rather for plan than for style) — June Final.

The effect of the game of foot-ball on ——— is something which is more 'to be desired than gold; yea, than much fine gold.' The effect of this game can be summed up under two headings: the effect on the players, and the effect on the student body.

Under the effect on the players we can consider the game with the field as our standpoint. Here we see seventy or eighty strong, brawny men weighing from one hundred and fifty pounds upward, each fighting with all the vim in him to make a position on the eleven. Probably he is an old man and a new student with a past record from another school is opposing him for the position. It stands to reason that the team will gain strength and that the man displaying the greatest force at the most opportune time will be the candidate chosen for the position. Besides giving the school the best men for the team, this work on the field has a greater end. A friendship nourished on the foot-ball field is something which is everlasting and never dies until both parties are called from this world. Nothing is happier for a man in his old age than to meet the man with whom he played on the school eleven.

From the standpoint of the student body we may consider the effect of the game in the knowledge of the game, and in the school spirit.

Many students entering ——— come direct from private schools and tutors where they subject to strict discipline and to the recreation † which their superior chooses for them. Many of these schools have not enough pupils and hence either to play foot-ball or to have a practical † knowledge of the game is out of the question. But when this sort of a student sees the energy and vim put into the game, it is not long before he appears on the class field, dressed in the best armor that money can buy, probably to compete for his numerals with a student who is obliged to place his strength in his muscles for the want of a proper suit. †

But the school spirit has the most important gain of all these. When † the new students arrive in the fall, the varsity foot-ball practise is the only amusement going on. A fellow, probably away from home for the first time is homesick and drifts to the field to drive dull care away. † Here he meets friends in the same predicament and instantly a friendship springs up which is later nourished with good results. (Time)

3. MY COLLEGE COURSE.

(*Topic No. 5.*) From a *C* book — June Final.

From the character of my admission examinations, it may seem that I intend to take a literary course in college. I have offered Greek, Latin, and English, subjects which prepare very well for a Bachelor of Arts course.

I do not, however, intend to continue the studies which I have offered for admission. Instead, I intend to take up Civil Engineering, a line of study entirely new to me. The reason that I have offered the † subjects that I have is that it is easier to get into Harvard by taking Greek or Latin, which count four points each, than by taking Geography, Projections, or other scientific subjects, which are rated comparatively low for admission. Civil Engineering appeals to me because it requires healthy outdoor work and is also a well-paid occupation.

During my first year I shall follow out the program formerly required in the first year of the Lawrence Scientific School in the Civil † Engineering course. Accordingly, my studies will include, Physics, Chemistry, Mathematics, and Mechanical Drawing, besides some foreign language, as German.

These courses will give me a preparation in the elementary subjects of Engineering, needed for the summer camp at Squam Lake New † Hampshire, where I will spend several weeks, probably at the end of the first year.

During the second and third years I shall continue to follow the same general course. My studies will include Calculus, Statics, Road Engineering, Steam Machinery, Resistance of Materials, and other subjects allied to Civil Engineering. Thus, it will be seen that my course during my first few years at Harvard will be almost entirely composed of scientific subjects.

At the end of the third year I expect to have enough courses to graduate from the college, and to enter the Graduate School of Applied Science or some similar institution where I can get a professional training.

My general plan in college is to take courses which will afford me a practical and useful knowledge of matters connected with Civil Engineering. Since my course in High School has been almost entirely literary, I feel that I have now all the knowledge that is necessary along that line. However, I do not propose to give up entirely the study of literary subjects. In spare hours at college, I shall undoubtedly find time to refresh my memory on these subjects, and to take them up as far as may be agreeable to me.

4. MY REASONS FOR MY CHOICE OF COLLEGE.

(Topic No. 5, September.) From a B book — Preliminary. Candidate failed in June; his one-hour composition then was on Sam. Johnson.

† Coming from ——— to Harvard is coming almost alone, at least as far as friends are concerned. Out of a senior class of fifty-odd, probably twenty of my best friends are going to enter Yale college; fifteen or so, Princeton; and the balance of the college men going to Cornell and the smaller institutions. I am the only one to choose Harvard. Possibly the spirit of popularity of Yale and Princeton in my home is due to the fact that they are near, seem to belong more to ——— than the Cambridge university does; I cannot say.

My inclinations in regard to studies naturally entered into the choosing of a college. I have always done writing, to a certain degree. Once several of my friends and I compounded a grand, glorious, and grandiloquent, version of *La Morte d'Arthur*, I, being the playwright. † It was grandiloquent, you may be sure. Ever since I reached the mature age of eight I have been intensely interested in the drama. I have seen many excellent plays, well acted, and several great actors. Of course I have tried to act myself, who has not who leans toward † such things? and I have always been in our school plays. Shakespeare opened a world of beautiful thoughts, and pictures to me as soon as I was able to read him sensibly, although I particularly love the plays not studied at my school. *Othello* and *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Merchant of Venice* and *Antony and Cleopatra*, are all favorites of mine. Music is my great bent. I have studied the violin a little and the piano seriously for a limited time, but I seemed at first to be almost too nervous to have the proper patience. Now, I love and play music whenever I get a chance. I have studied theory of course, and wrote an opera in 5 acts when I was fourteen. We will not discuss the opera musically. It was on a play of Victor Hugo's. Now I am writing music all the time and, I hope, growing, musically.

The three great colleges were looked at in turn to decide which would offer me the best opportunities. Although I fully appreciate Yale with its wonderful spirit and so on, yet its situation is rather unsatisfactory. Yale is at New Haven, and Yale men, — but that's † about all as far as I am concerned. Princeton is beautiful, but there is nothing there but a town with none of the great advantages I was seeking. Harvard is situated in, or rather almost in a large city which has one of, if not *the* most cultured population of any city in America, although I love my own city very dearly.

Although I have never travelled in Europe, much to my misfortune, I have learned from many reliable sources that any European, when questioned as to the relative importance of value of American college degrees, will always prefer those of Harvard. The language courses I know to be excellent, for many of my brother's friends, who are, fortunately for me, also my friends, have taken them. Of course other great colleges have fine language courses as well. Then an interesting reason why I have chosen Harvard is that my ancestors from the time of its beginning have come here. This was a strong argument in my mother's eyes and so it influenced her decision. I believe one of my forefathers, ———, was a president of Harvard. This is just one of the reasons that I chose the college so I have mentioned it. Then, † Harvard is only approached in musical advantages by Columbia, where I should not care to go, although probably my best boy friend in the world has chosen it for his university. With Boston, the home of the excellent Symphony orchestra with its public rehearsals which are of † great value to the music student, it's many musicians, and its pro-† spected opera house it almost outways the advantages afforded by †

New York, where, of course, there are *two* excellent homes of the music drama, and Carnegie hall. The music courses at the university itself ought to be, and I have every reason to believe are unequalled in America, with the two fine men and musicians who are at the head of this department.

I think, and I hope I have been able to convince my reader, that for my particular requirements, no other American university can offer so many and such fine advantages, as the college founded in the childhood of our country by John Harvard. Of course in this paper I am speaking purely from my own point of view.

5. THE MOST EXCITING INCIDENT IN IVANHOE.

(*Topic I*, 6, *June*.) From a *B* book raised by second examiner to *A* — Final.

The scene which I consider the most exciting in *Ivanhoe*, is not the "gentle and joyous Passage of Arms of Ashby;" or even the part where Rebecca is waiting for a champion; but the dungeon in Baron Front-de Bœuf's castle, where the baron, the two Saracens, and that most pitiful and loathsome creature, Isaac of York, are at work. The Baron asks for money and Isaac, of course, denies that he has any. Then the baron calls in the two steel-faced Saracens, and they go quietly about their work, warming grates and pincers, and adjusting screws, racks, cords, and other tools, which Isaac's friends had probably often felt and told him of. Front-de-Bœuf is getting more impatient and I remember that when I read it, — I was very young at the time, — I looked ahead and saw that the end of the chapter would come soon, and I hoped that Isaac would refuse the money before the end, and that Front-de-Bœuf would order the Saracens to begin their work. The horn, blowing in the last paragraph, was a relief, but nevertheless, somewhat of a disappointment.

II. MATERIAL FOR AN EXAMINATION PAPER ON THE OPEN-LIST.

Since the open-list was adopted (1905), the whole question of English requirements and examination has been thoroughly overhauled by expert committees and conferences; and now, before the first open-list goes into practical operation, a second group-list has been adopted (Feb. 22, 1909) with far-reaching innovations. (*The New Requirements*, Leaflet No. 69, Mar. 1, 1909.) At the last meeting of the English Lunch Club (Boston, May 8) a dozen or more school-men entertained themselves (seriously) and amused their college club-mates with "specimen examination papers" on the 1909 open-list. The following questions are selected from a great variety submitted for discussion on that occasion. The grouping and the time-allotment are in accordance with the new form of examination, similar to the new Harvard Latin and Greek examinations, — a single paper adapted to the use of candidates who divide their examinations into preliminary and final, or who take all at once. Of course, more options, and options

from more prescribed groups, are here provided than will occur on any one paper; usually, questions on each of the books of two groups will suffice (cf. A I, 5, 6). The type of paper here suggested provides an examination for all kinds of candidates, thus:

a PRELIMINARY (1½ hours)		b FINAL (1½ hours)	
A (one hour)	B (half hour)	C (1 h. or ¾ h.)	D (½ h. or ¾ h.)
I. <i>Reading Books</i>	<i>Composition</i>	<i>Composition</i>	<i>Study Books</i>
Short ¶'s and questions.	(short)	(essay)	"Questions upon
II. <i>Grammar and Rhetoric</i>	"Upon some	"Subjects from	content, form, and
Practical essentials, sense	topic drawn from	books for study,	structure, and upon
analysis, construction	the student's general	from other studies	the meanings of
of words, and good usages.	knowledge and experience."	and from personal	words, phrases, and
		knowledge and experience."	allusions."

$a + b$ —Candidates taking both at once will omit **B**. They need not be required to answer all of **A**, if the maximum time of two and a half hours can not be provided for the examination.

A. I. BOOKS FOR READING.

(Give concise answers in a word, sentence, or a paragraph, designed chiefly to show that you have read the books appreciatively).¹

1. (a) Name all the books which you have read in preparation for this examination so far as you can recall them. Give the name of the author in each case. (b) Classify the books just named under the following heads: Prose Fiction, Other Prose, Drama, Other Poetry. (c) Name the principal characters in two of the books just classified.

2. Character is portrayed in literature in four ways: 1, by what a person says or fails to say; 2, by what some one says about the person; 3, by what the person does or fails to do; 4, by what the person causes others to do. — Illustrate Shakspeare's use of two of these methods by reference to any of the persons in *As You Like It*, *Julius Cæsar*, *Merchant of Venice*, *Henry the Fifth*, *Twelfth Night*. (Group I.)

3. Which women in Shakspeare's Plays (Group I, see Question 2) do you find most interesting, and why? (Give your reasons very briefly — 5 m.)

4. Take one: (a) Who was Will Wimble? (b) Who was Pliable? (c) How did Franklin try to improve his style of composition? (d) What were Bacon's ideas on reading? (5 m. — three or four sentences) (Group II).

5. (Group IV.) Take one: (a) The most ridiculous performance of Dr. Primrose. (b) The critical point in the plot of *Ivanhoe*. (c) An occasion on which Quentin Durward showed marked quickness of wit. (d) Sunshine and Gloom in *The House of Seven Gables*. (e) Some of the fights in *Henry Esmond*. (f) The charm of *Cranford*. (g) Why is Dickens's Story called *A Tale of Two Cities*? (h) Points where the main-plot and the under-plot of *Silas Marner* come together. (i) Who was Lorna Doone?

¹ In this "composite" paper, no attempt is made to apportion time *precisely to each question*, — each examiner may determine that for his own selection. (At the discussion, each school-man thought the others' papers harder than his own; and the college-men thought the questions often harder than they would yet dare to set; but both agreed that a minimum number of words should be added to every time-limitation of composition work, — perhaps at the rate of 200 or more words of narrative, 150 or more of exposition, etc., in half an hour.)

6. (Group VI). Take one. (a) Is the *Ancient Mariner* narration or description? (b) The Disguise of King James. (c) Mazeppa's Ride. (d) What attracted me most in Wordsworth, Shelley, or Keats. (e) The most stirring narrative in Macaulay's *Lays*. (f) The most noticeable characteristic of Poe's poems. (g) The moral of *Sir Launfal*. (h) The Oxus. (i) "Why don't you speak for yourself, John?" (k) Take one: 1. How Gareth became a knight. 2. The Diamond Jousts. 3. Excalibur. (l) Take one: 1. Compare Browning's narrative poems with Scott's, Byron's, or Macaulay's. 2. Compare Browning's lyrics with Wordsworth's or Shelley's. Brief justification of your preferences.

7. Write a short letter to your English teacher telling him which of the books that you have read in Group IV appealed to you the most strongly, and showing why you prefer it to the others in the list with which you are acquainted. (15 m. 75-100 words.)

8. Write a brief sketch of the life or of the character of one of the Essayists. (V.)

9. Quote ten consecutive lines from Shakspeare, Goldsmith, Wordsworth, Keats, Shelley, Tennyson, or Browning. (Print only one or two on a paper.)

A. II. GRAMMAR AND RHETORIC

1. "Now allow *me* to read you a scene, and then the present company can judge between your favorite, Mr. Boz, and Dr. Johnson."

She read one of the conversations between Rasselas and Imlac, in a high-pitched, majestic voice; and when she had ended, she said: "I imagine I am now justified in my preference of Dr. Johnson as a writer of fiction." The Captain screwed his lips up, and drummed on the table, but he did not speak. She thought she would give a finishing blow or two.

"I consider it vulgar, and below the dignity of literature, to publish in numbers."

"How was the *Rambler* published, ma'am?" asked Captain Brown, in a low voice; which I think Miss Jenykn's could not have heard.

"Dr. Johnson's style is a model for young beginners. My father recommended it to me when I began to write letters. I have formed my own style upon it; I recommend it to your favorite."

"I should be very sorry for him to exchange his style for any such pompous writing," said Captain Brown. *Cranford*, Chap. I.

(a) What is the principle of paragraphing in the above? Criticise the second paragraph. (b) How should *you* naturally express the thought of the last sentence? Criticise its present form. (c) Is the sentence beginning "My father," ¶ 5, periodic or loose? Change it into the other form. (d) Explain the punctuation of ¶ 4. Parse *which*. (e) What kind of sentence is the first in ¶ 2? Specify the clauses.

2. Write out in simple, direct prose the thoughts in the following stanzas from Gray's *Elegy*: [Stanzas xv-xix, — from "Some village Hampden" to "noiseless tenor of their way." Give the case of the italicised words (*tyrant, applause, threats, ruin, crimes, pangs, pride, wishes*).

3. (a) Write a simple sentence; underscore the unmodified subject and predicate. (b) Write a sentence with two co-ordinate members; underscore the first member. (c). Write a sentence with a principal and one or more subordinate members; underscore a clause in this sentence.

4. (a) Which is stronger in respect to unity, a complex or a compound sentence? Explain. (b) Which is more important in a sentence, grammatical accuracy or rhetorical excellence? The essentials of each.

5. *The Living Language*. — (a) Difference between *few men* and *a few men* — Why? The singular of *men*; the plural of *man-of-war* or *man-servant*, *Norman*, and *Northman* — Why? (b) Take one: 1. "He was given a great reception" — Case of *he*; of *reception* — Why? (Cf. Chaucer, *Prolog*, 293, him was levere (=lief, he would rather). 2. "Who are you going with?" Case of *who*? (Cf. *Hamlet* 1, 4, 189, *Hor.* My lord, I think I saw him yesternight. *Ham.* Saw? Who? (Imagine anybody nowadays saying "Whom?")) 3. "It's me," "it's her," "it's I." — Discuss the case of the (separable) pronoun. 4. If the printer were to insert *said he* after *Discuss*, and punctuate correctly, how many pieces of type would he have to use, including letters, spaces, and points?

6. "She said that she —" Complete the sentence with *would go* and *should go*, and distinguish four meanings.

B. COMPOSITION (One half hour)

Write a short Composition (200 words or more) on one of the following topics:

1. Narrate the most exciting (or most humorous, etc.) event in your life.
2. How dramatic representations have helped my appreciation of literature.
3. What I have learned about how to write themes (or to sail a boat, to camp out, to build a cabin, to make a dress, to manage a motor-boat, motor-car, etc.)
4. Why I found the study of Modern Languages (or American History) more interesting (or profitable) than the study of Ancient Languages (or Ancient or English History) (or *vice versa*), or My experience with Latin, or German, or Mathematics, etc.
5. Describe some scene or person that made a lasting impression upon you. (Subordinate narration; and, whether you invent or not, try to make your reader *feel* your sensations and emotions.)
6. Our School Paper (or School Debating) and my share in it.
7. What kind of recreation I enjoy most. (Exposition, narration, and description).
8. Give an account of what seems to you the most interesting scene in any of the novels you have read in Group IV (the list may be inferred from A I, 5).
9. Tell the story of some narrative poem you have read in Group VI (the list may be inferred from A I, 6).
10. Imagining yourself to be one of the characters in the novel you liked best (in Group IV), write to another character a letter in harmony with your conception of the character which you are personating. (Make the letter consistent with the facts in the novel.)
11. Give your reasons for liking or disliking one of the following works: Bacon's *Essays*, *Pilgrim's Progress*, *Sir Roger de Coverley Papers*, Franklin's *Autobiography*. (Group II.)
12. If I were an actor, I should prefer to act the part of —. (Select a part from your prescribed reading, and make clear the grounds of your choice.)
13. Group I. Take one: (a) 1. "All the world's a stage." Who says these words? Quote the whole speech if you can; if you can not, tell the substance of it; or 2. Describe a scene in the Forest of Arden as you picture it to yourself. (b) 1. What is the effect upon the reader of Nell Quickly's description of the death of Falstaff? or 2. What famous events in English history does *Henry the Fifth* commemorate? Why should it have been popular in Shakspeare's time? (c) 1. What characteristic of the Roman mob is shown in *J. C.*? or 2. Antony says: "Now let it work. Mischief, thou art afoot." Describe the scene immediately preceding this speech. (d) Which, Antonio or Bassanio, has the more important part? Give your reason for your opinion; or 2. What do you think of the treatment of Shylock? (e) 1. Is Malvolio to be pitied or not? Give your reasons; or 2. Do you think *Twelfth Night* would be a better play if the real love scenes were omitted, and if only the scenes like those in which Sir Toby or Malvolio figure were included? Give your reasons.
14. Group V. Take one: — (a) 1. Write a description of "Sleepy Hollow" as you imagine it; or 2. What things in English Country and Country-Life particularly impressed Irving. (b) 1. What was Lamb's state of mind on retiring from business? Illustrate if you can by *The Superannuated Man*; or 2. Tell as much as you can of what Lamb says about "Books and Reading." (c) 1. In what way is De Quincey's style different from Addison's or Macaulay's? or 2. In *The Dream-Fugue*, De Q. says: "Where the terraces ran, there did we run; where the towers curved, there did we curve." Continue the description of the ride. (d) 1. What does Carlyle mean by *Hero*? or 2. "No man is a hero to his valet." What does Carlyle say on this proverb? (e) 1. What does Emerson say of Shakspeare's originality or of self-reliance? or 2. What resem-

blance do you find between *Representative Men* and *Heroes and Hero-Worship*. (f) 1. How is the trend of thought in *King's Treasuries* typical of the trend of Ruskin's life? or 2. Ruskin says: "Ye have despised literature." How had the English people offended?]¹

15. *Honor questions*. — It is understood that any candidate who selects one of these questions (which may be substituted for any of the above) is attempting something better than mere passing rank.²

- (a) The influence of the Bible on English Writers.
- (b) Imagining yourself an Elizabethan, give an account of the performance of one of Shakspeare's plays. Describe the theatre, stage, setting, and audience; and lay stress upon the incidents of some particularly striking scene.
- (c) Describe a scene in Button's Coffee-House in 1712.
- (d) Compare the lyrics of the XVI Century with those of XIX Century.
- (e) Trace the allegory in *Pilgrim's Progress*. Mention other famous allegories.
- (f) Explain why the name "essays" may be applied to writings so different as Bacon's, Lamb's, and Emerson's.
- (g) Reconstruct *Rip Van Winkle* as a magazine short-story (Hints: Begin with Rip's return to the village; compress the action into a short scene at the inn; let the conversation reveal Rip's previous history; and end with the recognition).

C. COMPOSITION. Take one (One hour, or three-quarters):

1. What difference between plays and novels have you discovered in your reading of Groups I and IV (see A I 3, 5). Illustrate your points by examples, and make specific reference to *Macbeth* whenever you can.

2. What have you learned about the structure of plays from your study of *Macbeth*? Be specific. You may illustrate the matter further by plays you have seen on the stage.

3. What estimate can you make of Milton's life and character from his writings? Refer to passages and quote if you can.

4. Give the substance of the conversation between Malcolm and Macduff when they first meet in England. The dramatic purpose of this conversation. If your opinion of Malcolm is raised or lowered by this scene, explain why.

5. What in your conception are four or five of the strongest points which Burke makes in his plea for Conciliation?

¹ In 1913 and after, should questions 8-14 be adapted to "short paragraph" topics and transferred to A I, or left here as options? According to the "new requirements" (Conference of Feb. 22, 1909), "On the books prescribed for reading, the form of the examination will *usually* be the writing of short paragraphs on several topics which the candidate may choose out of a considerable number." (A I.) The other form of examination in mind was the answering of questions designed to elicit evidence of appreciative reading. The sentiment of the Conference was *unanimous* against using the reading books "as a basis for frequent practice in English Composition." Consequently, the intention of the following suggestion in the new requirements is unmistakable: "The first part of the examination may include also questions upon grammar and the simpler principles of rhetoric (A II), and a short composition upon some topic drawn from the student's general knowledge or experience (B 1-8). Whenever a short (half-hour) composition is set, therefore, the topic, according to the new requirements (1913), should be non-literary.

² "That the really superior may have a chance to differentiate themselves from the multitude, I consider to be an important feature of a good English paper," says a distinguished teacher of English in a famous school. In general, according to him, "the questions should be worded so as to call for (1) some exact knowledge; (2) some literary appreciation; (3) some exposition; (4) some narrative or description."

6. Comment upon this statement about Johnson: "Though the celebrity of his writings may have declined, the celebrity of the writer is as great as ever."

7. Discuss in full the points raised by Miss Jenkyns in the quotation A II, 1.

8. "If America gives you taxable objects on which you lay your duties here, and gives you at the same time a surplus by a foreign sale of her commodities to pay the duties on these objects which you tax at home, she has performed her part of the British revenue." Compare D 1, formulate a title of your own, and write a theme on the general topic suggested by the passages.

9. The Dramatic Function of the Witches in *Macbeth*.

10. Write a description of a Place, Scene, Setting, or Condition, real or imaginary, having some dominant tone (gloom, chill, sunshine, silence, bustle, heat, ruin, etc.).

11. Narrate skilfully some significant incident of your school life (not a vacation episode, trip, etc.).

12. The most instructive experiment I ever performed.

13. How Books (or —s) are made. (From personal observation.)

14. Basket-Ball v. Hockey (without artificial ice).

15. Which is the best kind of boat for cruising? or for racing? or of motor-car for every-day use? (Take one. Try to convince a disbeliever.)

D. BOOKS FOR STUDY (One-half or three-quarters of an hour)

1. "I for one protest against *compounding* our demands: I declare against *compounding* for a poor limited sum, the immense, *ever-growing*, eternal debt, which is due to *generous government* from *protected freedom*." Define the italicized words fully in the light of Burke's argument.

2. "What *beast* was 't then

That made *you* break *this enterprise* to me?

. . . Nor time nor place

Did *then adhere*, and yet you *would* make both."

Explain fully the situation, and its bearing on the characters involved.

3. "We have *scotch'd* the snake, not kill'd it:
She'll close and be herself, whilst our poor *malice*
Remains in danger of *her former tooth*.
But *let the frame of things disjoint, both the worlds suffer*,
Ere we will eat our meal in fear, and sleep
In the affliction of these terrible dreams
That shake us nightly. Better be with the dead,
Whom we, to gain our place, have sent to peace,
Than on the torture of the mind to lie
In restless *ecstasy*."

Fix the passage in the drama as accurately as you can. Paraphrase it as a whole, and explain carefully the italicized words.

4. [Print, without reference, *Mcb.* i, 3, 127-142 ("Two truths are told" to "nothing is But what is not")]. Explain the full significance of the italicized words: *Two truths*, *imperial theme*, *supernatural soliciting*, *earnest of success*, *Commencing in a truth*, *suggestion*, *use*, *murder* is but *fantastical*, *single state*, *function* *Is smothered in surmise*.

5. [Print, without reference, *Lycidas*, 85-90 ("O fountain *Arethuse*" to "Neptune's plea")]. Explain the meanings and allusions: *Arethuse*, *Mincius*, *vocal-reeds*, *That strain*, *higher mood*, *oat*, *herald of the Sea*, *plea*.

6. Quote at least ten lines from Milton, and discuss their significance to the poem and to you.

7. Explain or identify *Bacchus*, *Circe*, *Cerberus*, *Narcissus*, *Lydian airs*, *Cambuscan bold*, *Sabrina*, *Il Penseroso*, *Stygian Cave*, *Saturn* (10 m.).

8. Give approximately the dates at which the following authors were writing: Shakspeare, Addison, Irving, Lowell, George Eliot (5 m.).

9. By making use of the parentage of Comus and of Mirth (L'Allegro), show in what respects the two are alike and unlike.

10. Henry Cabot Lodge speaks of Webster's *First Bunker Hill Oration* as "a succession of eloquent fragments." Take one: (a) Discuss this statement. (b) Could the same have been said of Burke's *Speech for Conciliation*? Why?

11. *Comus* and *Macbeth* as dramatic types — Discuss them in two of the following respects: (1) adaptability to a modern audience; (2) naturalness of plot; (3) delineation of character; (4) moral purpose.

12. "There is not one entirely heroic figure in all Shakspeare's plays, except the slight sketch of Henry the Fifth, exaggerated for the purposes of the stage. . . . Whereas there is hardly a play that has not a perfect woman in it." — Ruskin, *Sesame and Lilies*.

Take sides on this generalization, and support it by specific examples from your reading of the plays.

13. "A writer who was guilty of such *improprieties* had little right to blame the poet who made *Hector* quote *Aristotle*, and represented *Julio Romano* as flourishing in the days of the *Oracle of Delphi*." — Explain the allusions. What is an anachronism?

14. Point out the likenesses and differences in *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*.

15. Johnson v. Chesterfield — the cause of the ill-feeling, and the importance of the issue.

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1909 — JAN., No. 67. Coöperation in English, *Oscar C. Gallagher*. FEB., No. 68. Accuracy, *Ida C. Bender*. MARCH, No. 69. The New Requirements, — *Report of the National Conference, Feb. 22, 1909*. APRIL, No. 70. Echoes of the Annual Meeting, A Weekly School Paper, Debating Clubs, *W. S. Hinchman*, The Use of Specimens in the Class Room, *F. W. C. Hersey*, The Educational Theatre and Our Children, *Prof. Geo. P. Baker*. MAY, No. 71. The Old Testament in the Schools, *Prof. J. H. Gardiner*. JUNE, Double No. 72-3. 12 pages. The New Examinations, *The Secretary*.

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TRAINING IN ILLITERACY¹

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If there be any matter connected with the large subject of education on which the people of this country would agree, it is that the ability to write correct and reasonably clear English is its most important practical result. Every school, or at any rate every secondary school, is expected to give to its pupils the power to express themselves in correct and reasonably clear English; and failure to do so in any large number of cases is regarded as discreditable to the school.

Most laymen, whether parents or employers, would assume as unnecessary of proof the further proposition that the responsibility for good English rests with the teachers of English in the schools. As to this second proposition, however, there is ground for difference of opinion; the main purpose of this paper will be to show that the present very spotted record of our schools in this matter of English is not to be laid at the door of the teachers of English alone. The training of teachers in English and the quality of the textbooks have improved immensely in the last fifteen years. We have not yet arrived at perfection, but even the imperfect knowledge that I have of the teaching of English in the schools makes me sure that this work is in the main sound and effective. The fault which we admit must too often be found with the result does not lie wholly, at any rate, with the teachers of English.

What other causes, then, can be found for this lamentable failure of our schools? One can think offhand of several. There is the fact that the teacher of English in the city schools is swamped by the ever-increasing flood of the foreign-born, and must not infrequently impart the rudiments of the language to

¹ Revision of an address on "Co-operation in English" delivered before the New England Association of Teachers of English, at Springfield, Mass., November, 1908.

children who out of school hear only Italian or Yiddish or some dialect of Bohemia or Poland. Another cause is that the teacher of English is expected to teach two subjects in a single allotment of time. A boy must be taught not only to write, but also to read his literature intelligently and accurately as well; and the teacher of English in most schools has one allowance of time for this double job. I often wonder how the teacher of English gets any time at all for composition. Another cause is the astonishing appetite that the present generation has for the cheaper newspapers and magazines, a sort of reading which seems invented to asphyxiate any growing sense for style. All these are undoubtedly true and serious causes; but none of them, I think, is so grave as the one which is the subject of this paper: the condoning of illiteracy by teachers of other subjects. On this matter there can be, I believe, only one reasonable view; this is a practice which is discreditable to the schools in which it is found. It is a shameful waste of the time of the boys and girls in the school, and of the money of the taxpayers, that results which are laboriously built up by the toil of one set of teachers should be thrown down and scattered to the winds by the indifference or ignorance of their associates. No business house would hire one set of clerks to collect and tabulate accounts, and then allow the other clerks to tear up and scatter the sheets in any way that suited their own convenience. Yet that is closely analogous to what is taking place in most of our schools, if only one adds that the first set of clerks must afterward pick up and piece together the *dissecta membra* of their original achievement, and so do their work all over again. Such a state of affairs seems absurd and monstrous when baldly stated; yet a very cursory examination would show that it exists in most of our schools today.

Now, to begin with, this condoning of illiteracy cuts square across what I suppose to be one of the fundamental principles of teaching, that a habit can be acquired only by unremitting and unbroken practice. The new science of psychology has confirmed this principle and formulated it more clearly, perhaps; but since teachers began to teach, all wise practitioners have insisted on the

scriptural doctrine, "precept upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little and there a little." The command of a correct and clear style in writing must be a habit: except for the almost minute minority who are gifted by nature, mankind gains control of its mother tongue by the long and slow process of transmuting rules into instinctive action. This is especially true of writing correctly. A word must be spelled in the one right way so often that the visual and auditory and motor channels by which it comes to its place on the paper are worn into a rut, so deep that it becomes an effort to break away from that particular combination of letters. Commas and semicolons and periods must have been used so often and so regularly in their appropriate place in given combinations of words that they drop from the pen without thought on the part of the writer. Simple or compound or complex sentences must have been used so frequently that they shape themselves to the flow of ideas and impressions without conscious thought. And the less the background of culture the more certain it is that this habit of correct and clear expression on paper can be built up only by constant and unremitting repetition of the one right form.

What happens to the boy or girl whose habits of expression are thus in process of slow creation when he goes to a school where respectable English is not insisted on in all his classes? In a morning of perhaps five periods he will spend one period under the supervision of a teacher of English and four under other teachers. If now for the one hour he must spell and punctuate carefully and write complete and grammatical sentences, and then for the other four he writes and speaks as carelessly and illiterately as he chooses, how far ahead is he in the formation of this habit that the world outside the school expects of him as a matter of course? In most cases he has lost ground; and in schools where such culpable laxity of organization prevails, the teacher of English is eternally rolling his pupils up hill to see them fall back in the succeeding hours. The average boy is so far human that he will ordinarily take no more trouble than he has to; and it is indubitably harder for him, as for grown people, to write carefully. If his teacher of history or physics

or zoölogy will accept exercises with misspelled words, no punctuation, and abortive or undivided sentences, the average boy will shower them on him with careless and unstinting hand; and the efforts of the teacher of English to establish the habit of writing respectably become a vain fighting of the air.

It is not a theoretical state of affairs, of which I am writing, which might occur under the worst imaginable conditions. I have lately written to the headmasters of half a dozen public schools which were recommended to me as likely to show the best practice in the neighborhood of Boston; and they have been kind enough to send me exercises in other subjects than English which had been corrected in the customary way by the teacher of the special subject. An examination of these papers shows that the notice taken of bad English varies curiously, even in the same school. In one school the papers in botany were thoroughly corrected for English, even to the punctuation. The papers in zoölogy from the same school were written in sentences so shapeless that the meaning was often obscured by the lack of grammar, and whole paragraphs were innocent of both periods and capital letters; yet there was no indication that the teacher of zoölogy felt in any way disturbed or aggrieved by this illiteracy. In another school the papers in zoölogy again, as it happened, were full of shapeless sentences; and even so gross a misspelling as "a sought of thin skin" had been allowed by the teacher to pass without notice. But in this second school the papers in German sight translation were corrected thoroughly for their English, even to the point of insisting on the proper use of quotation marks. Thus in two schools which are considered to be representative of our best teaching in New England boys and girls are exposed to teachers whose influence on them is toward the formation of habits of illiteracy and against the formation of the habits of correct expression which they are expected to have when they leave that school. It is not too much to say, I think, that this is an unpardonable and discreditable waste of the time and energy of those boys and girls and of the money of the taxpayers who support those schools.

Nor is this waste necessary. If we begin to press this reform,

we shall be met at once by the cry that other teachers are already overburdened, that their backs will break if they must teach English as well as history or German or zoölogy. This cry we must expect, and it is not to be taken too seriously. The answer to it is twofold. In the first place it is a protest against doing something which no one ever asked should be done. No one expects that a teacher of history or of physics shall in the time given to history or physics teach English also; not only that, but it is not desirable that he should teach English, unless he has had special training for the purpose. The only thing that can be expected is that such a teacher shall either decline to accept written exercises that are splotted with misspelled words and abortive sentences, or else that he shall take notice of such illiteracies. He has no right to confirm bad habits in his pupils. In the second place, as the few papers which I have examined show, we are asking for no impossibilities. Good teachers of other subjects already, and apparently as a matter of course, take notice of bad English, and do their proper share toward the creating of the habit of writing respectably. A boy who is under such a teacher of botany or German is strengthening his habit of good English in at least one hour outside his regular instruction in English. And if a teacher of botany can do this, it is hard to see why a teacher of zoölogy should not do the same thing. It is therefore no scheme from Utopia that I am proposing when I hold that every teacher in a school should negatively, at any rate, take his or her part in the slow but steady formation of correct habits in the use of English.

Indeed schools, and we may hope that their number is not few, have already attacked this problem successfully. One excellent plan, which originated in the English High School of Boston, has been further developed and applied at the High School of Commerce in Boston. There, as the head of the department of English writes me, they hold

that it is unjust to the teacher in a department other than English to require him to correct more than casually mistakes in English, and unjust to the student who has proved his knowledge of a particular subject, to lower his mark in that subject because his English is poor. We have,

therefore, adopted the following plan. In case a pupil's test or exercise is noticeably defective in grammar, spelling, or punctuation, he must rewrite the exercise, correcting both particulars, or revise it before the mark given him in that subject is recorded. Second, without warning to the pupils of English, teachers frequently collect exercises and tests given in other subjects and correct them from the standpoint of English, entering the English mark thus obtained with the regular English marks.

We may suppose that other schools already are accomplishing this end in the same, or similar ways. Such a plan, if quietly and systematically enforced, removes the whole evil of which I have been speaking. It has one decided advantage from the point of view of the school: it encourages teachers of other subjects to look on reasonably correct and clear English as their right. Among the papers from schools which I have looked over, I found in some of the papers in zoölogy cases where two, or even three, sentences were run together without capitals or punctuation; and a boy in a class in political science wrote: "If the electoral college were abolished it would be very harmful." Now why should a teacher of zoölogy or of political science be expected to plow through these drifts of obscurity and illiteracy? If the idea could be implanted in the minds of such teachers that their time is wasted every time they have such unintelligible stuff handed in to them, we should be well started on the way to getting rid of the evil. If the normal boy be allowed to put in slovenly English he will certainly do so; but there is no reason why teachers of other subjects should not find out the degree of accuracy and correctness to which the teacher of English thinks that a given class should have attained, and then politely but firmly decline to look at any paper which does not reach that standard. And if a teacher will not assert his rights, the headmaster of the school should assert them for him and insist on his getting them.

Furthermore, every teacher in a school should feel that his or her real work is education, and not merely the teaching of a special subject. At all times it is his duty to make war on illiteracy. Until all teachers take this broad view of their profession and of their opportunities for good, we shall have badly educated children—children who know whether the third leg of a

grasshopper is on its mesothorax or its metathorax, but who, when they go to a business man to ask for work will expose their illiteracy as soon as they put pen to paper.

Now what can be done about the situation? The great number of stenographers and typewriters whose education has ended with the grammar school or the high school, except for some short training in a business college, shows that it is not unreasonable for average people to master the elements of correct expression; yet anyone who has read the examinations for entrance to any of our colleges has come to look on blundering and slovenly English as the regular equipment of the young men who are supposed to be the pick of their communities. There is no need of any new theory on the subject; for any headmaster or superintendent one may ask will answer automatically, "Every lesson should be a lesson in English;" and so in practice it is, but usually in bad English; and there in most cases the matter will rest. One of the bad specimens I have quoted above had been passed without notice by the headmaster of the school. Superintendents and school committees must bestir themselves, and light fires under the teachers if we are to have practical and effective attention to this very elementary question. It would not be a very difficult thing for the chairman of a school committee or a superintendent to collect papers occasionally from the schools for which he is responsible; and I feel pretty sure that in most cases he would be scandalized by the results. Then it would be a simple matter to announce that all teachers of all subjects would be held personally responsible if they received exercises badly spelled and obscurely expressed. Here I am not speaking without personal experience, for I have just seen a kindred experiment tried on the freshman class in English composition in Harvard College. Last autumn it was announced to the class that any piece of writing in which there were as many as two misspellings to the page would be called a failure. Four or five weeks afterward bad spelling had mostly disappeared from the writing of a class of four hundred and fifty men. Within a few days a student who has been teaching in one of the practice courses in a neighboring school has told me that

he has tried the same experiment on children of the upper grades of the grammar school, and with entire success. If the method has worked in these two cases why should it not work in others? If teachers of all subjects will resolutely decline to read exercises which are below the standard in correctness and clearness of English the boys and girls in our schools will acquire the habits of writing presentably. If these teachers go on as they are doing today, ignoring and condoning slovenly and incorrect writing, the same children will grow up with stumbling and discreditable habits of expressing themselves.